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Hamilton program becomes model for Olympics 'team' in Atlanta

Bert Witvoet

HAMILTON, Ont. — Barbara Mersereau is a bit apologetic about the fact that a four-member Olympics team from Atlanta, Georgia, is coming down to visit Friendship Centres, a Hamilton program for the homeless and mentally ill she started 10 years ago.

"We have only a basement office," she says modestly. But her voice picks up when she talks about the volunteer program that serves about 100 individuals a month in five different churches.

The team from Atlanta visiting the Friendship program, headed by Georgia state consumer relations director Larry Fricks, wants to set up a pilot project of six Friendship Centres in Atlanta, modeled on the Canadian plan.

The initial push for the centres is to be open from July 18 till August 16, concurrent with the 1996 Olympics. Fricks believes that homeless and mentally ill people are at great risk when major events like the Olympics take over a city.

Olympic-size stress

An article in the April 18 issue of the *Atlanta Journal* describes what one can expect: "The crowds. The traffic. The heat. The confusion. The stress. Most everyone expects some Olympic-sized hassles once the Centennial Games hit town this summer. But for thousands of metro Atlantans who are severely and chronically ill, many of them homeless, the added stress could prove more than annoying. Department of Human Resources officials fear it could push some people over the edge and into state mental hospitals."

Hope for permanence

According to Fricks, using the Hamilton model is a preventative measure. The centres will make use of students from Georgia State psychology and social departments. Participating churches will be selected by a committee. Main criteria applied by this committee will be density of population at risk, strong interest shown by a church and convenience of church facilities.

Fricks, who himself is a manic-depressive, hopes the centres will help dismantle stigmas

See **HAMILTON** *page 2...*

COURTESY BARBARA MERSEREAU

One of the favorite activities at Friendship Centres is card-playing

Controversy stirs over possible welfare cutbacks/adoption connection

Alan Doerksen (with files from *The Globe and Mail*)

TORONTO, HAMILTON, Ont. — Recently, a Children's Aid Society (CAS) worker in Simcoe County, Ont., drew a connection between the Ontario government's welfare cutbacks and an increasing number of families who are putting up their children for adoption. But the directors of two Christian adoption agencies say that welfare cutbacks have made only small difference in this area.

COURTESY JOAN KOSMACHUCK

Joan Kosmachuck, executive director of Jewels For Jesus

In early April, Judi Shields, director of planning and communications for Simcoe CAS (based in Barrie, Ont.), said that the Local CAS has been approached by at least 10 families considering having their children put up for adoption because they could not afford to keep them. At that time, Shields said, "We're looking at children who probably would not have come to our attention if it were not for the monetary situation. The cutbacks have hit people really hard."

In recent months, Simcoe CAS has found that a large number of families in the area have experienced problems because of the provincial government's 21.6 per cent cut in welfare rates last fall, Shields reported. Because of this, two children under 10 years old from two families have been put up for adoption by the local CAS.

Other factors

Premier Mike Harris rejected claims that two families in Simcoe County had been forced to give up their children because of cuts to welfare.

"We have checked with the director [of CAS] in Simcoe County, who has definitively said it is not the case," said Harris in the legislature. Harris told reporters that he had checked the results of a Ministry of Community and Social Services investigation and found that other

See **CUTS** *page 2...*

In this Issue

Marian Van Til attended literary feast in Grand Rapids ..... p. 10
When death comes, your friends need you ..... p. 12
Good news nature stories ..... p. 14

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News

Hamilton project is ecumenical in scope

... continued from page 1
about mentally ill people.

The centres are expected to provide emergency counselling and possibly meals for up to 500 people. Fricks hopes that some of the centres will become permanent drop-in centres for the city's mentally ill.

Government links with volunteers

Friendship Centres in Hamilton have provided social and recreational programs for people with nervous and emotional difficulties since September 1986 at St. Giles United Church. From a Thursday program there, it expanded to five days a week in different locations.

Funding of the centres was at first from donations. Hamilton-Wentworth Region now provides assistance for supplies and lunches and the Ontario Ministry of Health helps fund residents of homes for special care. Churches provide premises free of charge.

The work is done entirely by volunteers and members. Refreshments are available all day, and a light lunch is served at noon.

"We still bring out art materials and have sing-songs," writes Mersereau in an article entitled "Friendship Centres: a Ministry of Love." "But we more often play cards and games, or just talk, sometimes we go bowling or go on excursions."

Mersereau likes the idea that the project is ecumenical in scope. Today the five participating Hamilton churches are St. Giles United, St. Paul's Presbyterian, All Saints Anglican, First Pilgrim United and St. Patrick's Roman Catholic.

And of course, she's excited about the visit from the Olympic city group. "It's not very often Canadians get to play host about something we developed here, so we are thrilled at their coming," she says. "They have some great programs involving consumers and families of the mentally ill down there, so we are hoping to have a good exchange of ideas."

Something in common

Mersereau met Fricks at a national mental health conference in Florida two years ago, at a workshop about Friendship Centres. Like Fricks, she has a personal reason for being involved in the area of mental health. Her son is schizophrenic.

Mersereau plans to take the first-time visitors on a whirlwind tour of a Toronto church that does outreach to the homeless, the O'Keefe Centre and a sampling of consumer participation groups in Hamilton.

COURTESY BARBARA MERSEREAU

Barb Mersereau and a member named Richard perform at a Christmas dinner

Cuts impact denied

... continued from page 1
factors affected the adoption cases.

Adoption is not the only option CAS presents to its clients, explains George Leck, executive director of Simcoe CAS. "Adoption wouldn't be the first thing we talk about.... We talk about what's available in the social service system. We talk about pros and cons of giving their child up, too." Adoption is considered only after "all attempts to keep the family together have failed."

Not a big difference

Joan Kosmachuck, executive director of Jewels for Jesus Adoption Agency in Mississauga, Ont., says the cut to welfare rates in Ontario "has not significantly impacted the number of girls choosing or not choosing adoption." For women pregnant for the first time "it really isn't going to make a big difference.... Most girls who choose adoption choose it because they don't want to be on welfare."

Women with "crisis pregnancies" generally don't like the idea of being dependent on the government, says Kosmachuck. However, she adds, the welfare cuts may increase the number of abortions for women who become pregnant again.

Recently, there have been more older-child adoptions, something which may be partly due to welfare cuts, says Kosmachuck. Welfare can pay the basics for a single mother and her child, but it will not cover things like piano lessons later on. "When [the child] gets past the infancy stage, that's when you realize how important it is to have a dad."

Kosmachuck comments that the pro-life community has focused on saving children from abortion, but "the assumption was that that would involve parenting, and not a lot of work was done with adoption." Now, some women who chose to keep their babies a few years ago want to have them put up for adoption as two- or three-year-olds, she says.

At Jewels for Jesus there have been fewer adoptions this year than last, and considerably fewer than two years ago, Kosmachuck notes. Looking at the Simcoe County situation, she says that the Simcoe CAS may present the choice of adoption "more strongly or consistently as an option.... It's not the kind of thing a lot of girls would do on their own."

COURTESY JEWELS FOR JESUS

Women with crisis pregnancies have alternatives besides adoption

The Ontario government's planned "workfare" program may have a positive effect on women with crisis pregnancies, says Kosmachuck. "I think a lot of our girls would like to have a job.... That opportunity to prove themselves would be a real benefit."

Right now, going on welfare is appealing to some young people, but this could change when workfare is introduced.

There are several reasons why women consider putting up children for adoption, says Kosmachuck. Just because a pregnancy has occurred "does not automatically mean you can be a good parent."

Some women need to get more education so that they can get a good job. In that situation, the mother will be studying or working so the baby will spend much time in daycare unless he or she is put up for adoption. Other women need time for "emotional healing from abuse from the past."

Another factor some pregnant women have to consider is: "Are they prepared to co-parent with this person they can't stand the sight of?" says Kosmachuck. It is important for women with crisis pregnancies to put their child's needs ahead of their own, she suggests.

Besides adoption, Jewels For Jesus presents other options for parents expecting a baby. One is co-parenting, with the help of the baby's grandparents or someone else who could assist the child's parents. "Our goal is to help them problem-solve [and] figure whether or not they are in a position to be a parent."

Not the right time

Susan Chapman, executive director of Beginnings Counselling and Adoption Services of Ontario, sees no strong connection between welfare cuts and increase in adoptions. The number of families seeking to have their children adopted through Beginnings has remained stable recently at between seven and 10 families a year, reports Chapman. Beginnings serves mainly the Hamilton area.

According to Chapman, there are two main factors which lead a family to consider putting up a child for adoption. "Mainly it's an unplanned pregnancy," she says, or, "they don't feel they can provide adequately for their family." For some couples, it is not the right time for them to be parents, she adds.

Besides offering adoption services, Beginnings offers counselling to clients and sometimes presents other options, such as having the extended family involved with parenting the newborn child. "We don't counsel abortion," Chapman stresses.

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Opinion

Do we still value going to church?

Johannes DeViet

I have no idea what had caused aunt Trudy's deafness. Our Mom, her sister, kept her hearing as long as she lived, as did Grandpa, their father; so i did not run in the family. But aunt Trudy was really hard of hearing. And sometimes that gave rise to hilarious situations.

Mom would say, "That's a nice dress you're wearing, Trudy," and our aunt might answer, "Yes, and isn't the sun shining nicely today?"

Of course we all knew that it was not nice to laugh about a person's handicap. But at times we just couldn't help ourselves. With aunt Trudy it did not matter that much anyway. She had a real sense of humor. Once she knew what the fun was all about she laughed louder than any of us. No question, our aunt Trudy was a lovely woman.

Peace and quiet

One day Mom and aunt Trudy talked about our aunt's church habits. "Are you still going to church, Trudy?" Mom shouted. Trudy nodded vigorously. "Twice every Sunday." Mom sounded a bit amazed. "Can you still hear what's going on?" "I can't hear a single word, but the services give me an opportunity to have some peace and quiet."

We youngsters thought that this was really fun. In those days church services lasted at least an hour and a half and they were filled mainly with preaching. The idea of someone sitting there all that time without hearing a word, seemed utterly ridiculous to us.

Lately I have been wondering why a person like aunt Trudy would have kept going to church, even twice every Sunday, when she could not hear a word of what the preacher said. Couldn't she have stayed home to read her Bible and, perhaps, a printed sermon?

A bad heart?

As I try to understand the thinking and the motivation of aunt Trudy, my thoughts turn first to her father, my grandpa. He lived in another part of our city with two unmarried daughters, his widowed son, the latter's semi-orphaned daughter, his cat and his pigeons. Grandma had died when I was only a baby. I have no memories of her.

I was very fond of my grandpa and when I stayed there for a weekend I noticed that he left for church very early, and that he did not want me to walk home with him after church. When I asked Mom about that she explained that Grandpa had a bad heart and was always short of breath. He left early and walked home by himself because he had to stop to catch his breath every so often. The walk to church which took my uncle and me some 10 minutes, took him well over a half hour. Yet he was there twice every Sunday.

CC FILES

For the saints

It is easy, of course, to say that people in those days had very little in their lives aside from their work and church, and that, therefore, church was so important to them. But isn't that answer too glib, too easy? Was there not more to it than that?

As truly Reformed people they saw the preaching of the Word as central to the church's ministry. But they definitely did not go to church for the sermon only. If that had been so, aunt Trudy could have stayed home: She did not hear a single word of that sermon. And Grandpa could have saved his breath by reading, at home, a sermon prepared, perhaps, by the same preacher he'd see in the pulpit.

One thing which we, people of the late 20th century, tend to forget is that some two generations ago the pernicious individualism of today had not yet started its lethal work. We ourselves, all of us, have been so thoroughly influenced by that individualism that we can only understand the previous generations with great difficulty if at all. One of the reasons why Grandpa, my uncle, my parents, aunt Trudy attended church so faithfully was because it was there that they in many small but tangible ways experienced "the communion of the saints."

Tangible expressions

In our churches men and women sat in separate sections. The men on their way to their seat would shake hands all around. According to Dad, that's how they wished each other the Lord's blessing on the service. Before a man would sit down, he'd bow his head in a prayer for the preacher. And during the service, some neighbor would inevitably offer him a peppermint, or share a Bible or Psalter with him.

In the ladies' section there might have been fewer handshakes, but there were many nods, and smiles, and perhaps even some hugs and kisses. The women offered a private prayer for the preacher, too, but they did it sitting down. Someone must have helped aunt Trudy find the Scripture passage and the songs to be sung. As friendly gestures not only peppermints, but also bottles of cologne were passed around.

You may call me silly if you want, but all these were small, but very tangible expressions of the communion of the saints which you'd miss out on if you had stayed home.

Place of blessing

Grandpa and aunt Trudy could have received a blessing at home with the Bible and/or a book of sermons on their laps. But they could expect *greater* blessings in the gathering of God's people. I think here of Psalm 133, a pilgrim's hymn, sung by the Old Testament believers on their way to communal worship where they expected to receive God's most abundant blessings.

Grandpa and aunt Trudy expected those blessings, too, and I'm sure they received them. I'd like to think that, as my deaf aunt sat there in her silent world, our gracious God had whispered conversations with her, telling her of a time and a place where no one would say, "I am deaf."

Mom on the last day of her earthly life dramatically showed us the powerful attraction the church had for her. Her physical and mental health had been failing and for some time she had not been able to go to church. On that last Sunday she took her coat, hat and purse from the closet.

"Where are you going, Mom?" my sister asked. "To church," Mom answered. Her daughter had her sit on a chair and began to explain that she could not go. Mom slid from the chair, and when her lifeless body hit the floor she had gone to church: the church triumphant.

Am I too much of a mystic when I think that she had sensed the Lord's call and that she wanted to go and meet him where she always had found him, in church?

There's one more thing to mention. People of that generation did not only go to church to *receive*, but also to *give*. No, I'm not thinking of the collection now, important as the monetary offering is. They gave *their presence*, they presented *themselves*. Believing the church to be the Body of Christ, and seeing themselves as parts of that body, they did not want to diminish that Body by being absent without reason.

I really hope that such love for the church runs in the family, that it will do so for generations to come.

Johannes DeViet lives in London, Ont.

Psalm 133 — in New Testament Light

't-Is pleasant and 't-is good to be
where Christians meet in unity
for worship and for praise!
From Christ their Priest the Spirit runs
down on God's daughters and God's sons
in streams of saving grace!
Where fellow-members meet in love
't-is as if dew falls from above
upon the church below!
That's where the Lord his blessings sends!
That's where the life which never ends
will prosper and will grow.

J.D.V.

Editorials

Standing up for the authority of rulers

I wrote a short editorial for the March 15 issue about the public workers strike in Ontario and made a few comments that upset readers Gerald Vandezande (March 29) and Norm Slothouber (see letter this issue). My comments had to do with the fact that I did not think essential workers should have the right to strike, that calling a strike to fight a political battle amounts to rebellion and that we should not thumb our noses at "the rulers whom God has graciously set over us for our benefit."

I thank Vandezande and Slothouber for their eloquent letters, and recognize in their responses a genuine desire for fairness, something that my editorial also asked for. If I respond to them in an editorial this week, it's not to show that our differences are great, nor that I as editor want the last word. They are both welcome to respond to this editorial.

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In his letter, Gerald Vandezande defended the union's right to challenge the government when it believes it has been deprived of its rights, and he questioned my statement that God has placed the Harris government over us. He urged me to apply biblical standards to the strike situation. I felt that Gerald had misinterpreted my editorial. But I did not respond, thinking that perhaps some of our readers would take up the challenge.

Is God a Conservative?

This did not happen. Now a second letter by Norm Slothouber of Waterloo takes a tack similar to that of Vandezande's. Again my statement that God has placed the Harris government over us is challenged and interpreted as if I favor the Conservatives over the New Democrats.

Do I think that God approves of a certain election outcome or that he favors the Conservative ideology? Of course not. I'm surprised that such a conclusion would be read into my statement based on Romans 13. The Harris government is very much a humanist and materialist government. The only difference between Harris and Rae is that the one is business- and private-enterprise-oriented and the other is state- and society-oriented. But both seek first the kingdom of economic growth. I might like the moral agenda and fiscal restraint of the Conservatives, and, on the other hand, I might like the NDP's concern for the underdog, but that doesn't mean that either of them get my allegiance.

Fighting for the dignity of office

Why is it wrong to say that, whether through a democratic or non-democratic process, God places certain rulers over us? I ask myself. I would have said the same thing about the Rae government when it was in power. And I *did* say it in a Nov. 15, 1991, editorial when I wrote about the difficulty people have seeing "Ottawa" upheld in Romans 13.

I realize that at that time I was writing about the Mulroney government, and so readers might assume that I have a habit of writing this way when it concerns a Conservative government. But I think there is a good explanation for that.

The Canadian press, which is generally considered to have a liberal or slightly socialist slant, tends to be very hard on Conservative governments. Look at the insults that have been heaped on politicians like Mulroney, Manning, Klein and Harris. Whenever I meet that kind of disdain aimed at rulers, whom I honestly believe God has placed over us for a little while, I cringe, just as I cringed when traders at the Toronto stock market booed Bob Rae a few years ago. That is showing disrespect for the office and is an insult to God.

So I fight for the dignity of the office of rulers. And I fight for the application of Romans 13, which tells us that there is no authority that God has not established. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against God.

We must know that the Apostle Paul wrote this in the days when the Romans were in authority. Now the Roman rulers did absolutely nothing to relieve the plight of the poor nor to provide employment. Instead, they laid heavy tax burdens on people and rewarded any sign of opposition with the death penalty. The Roman government was a good deal more cruel and oppressive than the Harris government is. Yet, Paul says, everyone must submit to the governing authority, "for he is God's servant to do you good."

Unions should stick to economic sphere

And as far as the OPSEU strike was concerned, I did not say that this union did not have the legal right to strike or that it is necessarily wrong to strike for economic reasons. I *did* say that I regretted the fact that the previous government had given public workers the right to strike, because I think they are essential workers (think of the conditions prisoners and psychiatric patients had to endure during the strike). But since these workers were given that right by a legitimate government, they had the right to strike.

But it's a right that should be limited to contract considerations. Much of what OPSEU fought for did concern their contract and employment. But a fair bit of the rhetoric at the time of the strike showed political motivations, and that, in my opinion is the wrong reason for a strike. It has been clear from day one of this Ontario government's mandate that the labor movement, which includes OPSEU, has wanted to use every trick in its book to make it difficult for this government to govern (think of the rotating city-wide strikes in Ontario which have no specific labor contract focus).

We have much to learn

This is what I call a form of rebellion: not that unions seek legitimate redress of grievances, but that they allign themselves with one particular political party and thumb their noses at the government formed by another party. Unions are supposed to be economic, not political, agents.

When it comes to respecting the authorities that God has graciously placed over us for our benefit, whatever their political stripe, we have a lot to learn as Canadians. The vitriolic comments coming from some of the OPSEU leaders and picketers stood in stark contrast to the calm dignity of Ontario's Management Board Chair, Dave Johnson.

"Is everything fair in strike and war?" my editorial asked. The answer for me is still, No.

BW

Letters

The PCs — a divinely designed glove? Hogwash!

In expressing displeasure over the recent OPSEU strike, that meanwhile has run its course, you wrote in your editorial of March 15:

All of this misery has come to Ontarians courtesy of Bob Rae and the New Democratic Party, who, two years ago, passed a law that for the first time permitted public workers to strike. It was a mistake, we believe, because most public workers are essential workers and can cause too much harm by striking.

Most observers agree that this is more a political strike than an economic one. The labor government is desperately trying to make the Harris government unpopular. In a democracy, that is an unjust way of fighting the next election.

It's also a form of rebellion against God, who has placed the Harris government over us for a little while. We may not agree..., but that does not give us the right to hold the citizens of Ontario ransom to show our displeasure and to thumb our noses at the rulers whom God has graciously set over us for our benefit.

Far be it from me to presume denying you the freedom to express your displeasure. However, to compare the previous NDP government and the present PC regime variously as the agency of "misery" and "harm" on the one hand, over against the Harris government who God "has placed...over us," calling it "rebellion against God" and top that off with a statement alluding that Labor's strike is near to thumbing their noses, if not at God himself, then at God's directly appointed ones, exceeds common reasonableness. Even the divinely instituted government appears willing to negotiate and conclude a deal with OPSEU.

Moreover, your complaint that "most public workers are essential workers and can cause too much harm by striking" is totally unfounded. It is a well-known fact that, in consultation with the government, OPSEU agrees which services are "essential," and during the strike those services are maintained. If you are complaining because you were affected by this strike, then you are merely proving that that particular aspect of this strike was effective in your case.

To lambast a previous government because of today's problems seems a complete turnabout from the attitude in vogue in the media until a year ago. And as to your charge that "the labor movement is desperately trying to make the Harris government unpopular," I say, "Whom the cap (of making their government unpopular) fits, let him wear it."

It is obvious that the New Democratic Party and some of their policies may not meet all our "Calvinist" goals and objectives for the governing of our society. However, to suggest that a Progressive Conservative regime fits like a divinely designed glove is hogwash. At least the previous (NDP) government, as no other party, had the record of being open and approachable to the needs and interests of the religious sector and minorities in our society, in contrast to previous and present governments.

And, at the risk of stepping on sensitive toes, I would have you know that in my experience and that of others in the Christian community, I have found more efforts reflective of the priorities and the compassion expressed in the teachings of Christ in the social services programs of the NDP than in those of other main political parties.

Norm Slothouber
Waterloo, Ont.

Don't judge Promise Keepers too quickly

One of the things that amazes me is how some people view Promise Keepers and its intention in having large stadium events (John Tamming's April 19 letter). I have attended two events, one in Indianapolis and one in Detroit. Going to these conferences has been an uplifting experience for me in my walk with Jesus Christ.

When the name of Jesus Christ — who he was, who he is and who he will be — is proclaimed, why would Mr. Tamming quote a Jewish theologian regarding an ancient Dionysian cult? For Mr. Tamming to leave an event after being there only 20 minutes tells me he went there with some reservations. All Promise Keepers conferences and literature will emphasize that it is *not* what happens at large stadium events that matters the most but what happens when men come together in small groups at the churches they attend. Please, don't judge Promise Keepers by a 20-minute experience, but look at what it has done across the United States and Canada. It has brought many men closer to God, to their wives, to their children and to the church community to which they belong. That's what Promise Keepers is all about.

And, please, Mr. Tamming, don't worry about men doing the wave, bouncing balloons or flying airplanes at these events. You and I know they could be doing a lot worse things than that. God does have a sense of humor.

The next time you have a cup of coffee with some members of your church or with friends or co-workers, you may be encouraging someone else in his or her faith. This is exactly what Promise Keepers asks us to do, but, more importantly, is what God asks of us.

Give Promise Keepers a chance.

John Kreeft
Sarnia, Ont.

Shamed into discretion?

Regarding your Good Friday Slant editorial of April 5; is it perhaps a bit too naive to think that the press showed "admirable discretion"? Was it not the mayor of Dunblane who requested the press to leave prior to the funerals?

C. Beek
Regina, Sask.

Dishes and dialogue

How blessed you are
when invited
to sit at your host's table with
plastic tumblers, chipped China cups
mismatched bowls and plates
spotted place mats
and different styles of forks and spoons.

How blessed you are
to have received
unclouded crystal conversation
superior silverware laughter
lush linen pleasure
and ample platters of acceptance.

You did not enter the host's home;
You entered the heart.

Joan Bond
Halifax, N.S.

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Letter

Defends Promise Keepers and emotional expression

The letter by John Tamming (CC April 19) implies strongly that nothing godly can come from Promise Keepers or even Billy Graham Crusades. I care to differ. While such mass meetings may not be rooted in the Reformed tradition, it hardly means they are not Christian. No one way of evangelizing should be considered the "only" appropriate way. People can be manipulated over a cup of coffee as well as at a mass meeting. If Christ had meant for us to spread the Good News only through one-on-one contact, surely he would have led by example. Christ and later his disciples and other followers spoke also to groups and large audiences and their testimony was blessed. God has blessed people with different gifts and we ought to be careful before we judge the validity of the likes of Billy Graham.

A number of specific comments by Mr. Tamming are of concern to me. In his second paragraph he sarcastically reviews the testimony of a Promise Keeper speaker. He seems to imply that the man's testimony was phoney or enhanced for emotional appeal. Is Mr. Tamming naive enough to think such events could not have occurred or do not occur every day? Such testimonies speak to other hurting people and can provide hope that in Christ emotional, spiritual and physical healing is possible. Most people who share their testimony are not doing so for any effect other then to witness to the grace of God.

God commands us in his Word to "love our neighbor as ourselves." What a shame that Mr. Tamming could not turn and express Christian love to the person next to him. Does yellow polyester clothing indicate a person is not a Christian? If the person is from another province, state or country, does that indicate they are not a Christian? Come on! If in our tradition shaking hands or hugging and saying "I love you" in the Lord to a stranger is uncomfortable, why not just tell the person that you are happy they are a fellow Christian and share a brief conversation with that person (one-on-one witnessing!).

What's weird?

If Promise Keepers and Billy Graham Crusades are just "emotional swirls," why is so much effort made to train people to minister to attendees after the events? Attendees are encouraged to pursue Christian spiritual growth in the context of a Bible-believing church. By going to such a church, attendees should be able to do what Mr. Tamming fears they won't: review the event with a degree of detachment.

Mr. Tamming wonders "why men need to prime their intimate feelings in the context of tens of thousands of other men." He calls this "unnatural," "weird" and says it "enfeebles" men. Is he implying that emotional expression is only appropriate for women? I think it is more unnatural and weird if we are ashamed to express our feelings with one another, especially as Christians. A Christian group whether comprised of 10, 100, 1,000 or tens of thousands of people should be a safe and nurturing environment to express our most inner thoughts and feelings. Christ too shed tears and expressed anger in public. Did such emotional outpourings enfeeble our Lord? Hardly.

Yes, let's be "inspired," "normal" (maybe that needs defining!), "holy" and "sober" as Mr. Tamming says. But with our Reformed perspective let's be open to doing so in whatever context the Holy Spirit presents in our lives.

Margaret Griffioen-Drenth
Burlington, Ont.

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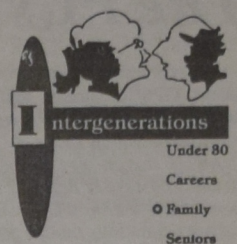
The culprit



I'd like to blame my whole ordeal on Marty's zippy little car. Surely I wouldn't have been zooming down a city street at 79 kph if I'd been behind the wheel of our family van.

I was driving along joyfully singing praises to the Lord on my way to pick up Angela and Alison from school on the first real spring afternoon of the season. Suddenly I noticed a white car with a blue and white stripe and a flashing red light coming out of a side street up ahead. This car appeared to be in a great hurry. I quickly slowed down to give it the right of way.

The police officer inside the car under the flashing red light had another plan. He pointed directly at me and motioned that I pull over to the curb.

My song stopped. My heart sank. I did as he directed. There I was, parked at the side of the street on a gorgeous spring afternoon with my window rolled down and a lump in my stomach.

One sad puppy

The police officer walked up alongside, "How are you?"

"Feelin' kinda sad," I replied.

He nodded.

"People are driving faster along here than on Highway 6. We've had complaints. May I see your driver's license?"

I took my wallet out of the purse beside me and pulled out the license. I handed it to him.

"And your insurance?"

That was a little more difficult to locate. I extracted a little crumpled pink paper with 1993 on. "That's not it. It's in here somewhere," I mumbled as I shuffled through the stack of cards and papers I'd been carrying around inside my wallet. "1992, 1994."

"You wonder why people keep those," the policeman mused.

I could have told him about never having time to find the old insurance card when my husband handed me the new one. Or, I could have mentioned my secret fear of throwing out the wrong insurance card. But I kept my mouth shut. The poor little sad puppy routine usually got me further than any amount of yapping. I was hoping for the police officer's pity, and maybe just a warning.

He waved my license. "I'll go check this out. You keep looking."

By the time he returned, I had the June 1996 insurance card and he had a freshly written ticket for me.

"I adjusted the amount down to 70 in a 50," he said kindly.

"What's that in money?" I wanted to know.

"They don't make it cheap for you nowadays. It's $80 for speeding and a $15 surcharge."

I thanked him and dropped the ticket onto the seat beside me. I waited for him to get back into his cruiser before I eased onto the road, where I poked along at an exact 50 kilometres per hour.

I still made it to school in plenty of time to pick up my daughters. While waiting for them I looked at the ticket. It seemed the $15 charge was a victim surcharge. Did that mean I was a victim? I thought I was the culprit. I certainly qualified for the ticket. Maybe I was the victim of the surcharge. I wondered what would happen if I didn't pay it.

With much emotional agony Marian den Boer paid the entire $95 but still wonders, "What is a victim surcharge?" Marian lives with her husband, Marty, and five children in Hamilton, Ont.

Media/Arts

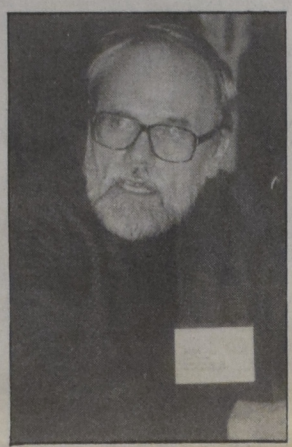
How do writers get 'inspired'?

Marian Van Til attended a three-day writers' conference in Grand Rapids, Mich., April 11 to 13 and writes about it on pages 10 and 11 of this issue. In this brief article, she gleans some comments from various authors about the writing process.

Marian Van Til

Along with innate talent, it seems that good writers are made by adversity and inevitability, molded by the grace of God. A common experience of these writers was a lonely childhood which forced them to read and read and read — and then to write. The "inevitability" comes in how they write and what they write about.

Madeleine L'Engle, Rudy Wiebe and poets Donald Hall and Luci Shaw were representative in their assertion that subjects and characters simply come to them, often unexpectedly, showing up unbidden and seemingly out of nowhere to insinuate themselves into their writing.



Rudy Wiebe

The market as God

Go with that, they urged novice writers. "The best things are not ours," said L'Engle, "they're gifts that we receive." And whatever you do, asserted Wiebe, don't write for the market. Not if you want to live with yourself as a writer. L'Engle talked along the same lines. "I'm afraid that many [publishers'] marketing departments have themselves confused with God. And that never works," she said. "They follow fads; but they can't really anticipate bestsellers, though they think they can. Be stubborn."

MARIAN VAN TIL PHOTOS

Madeleine L'Engle

They weren't talking about some frothy magic or modern version of the 19th century "inspired" artist who is online with the gods, or at least the Muse, and exists on a rarified plane to which ordinary mortals cannot aspire. They *were* trying to explain that, often, you don't know where your ideas come from. They may ferment from your experience, but they may be sent by God at the same time.

Donald Hall gave encouragement to people busy in any of the arts. The arts are "the creation that humans add to God's creation," he said, "and if we can extend that to many people, we're doing good work."

Writing requires trust

"My Muse is the Holy Spirit," asserted poet Luci Shaw. "I trust I'm being infused with thoughts beyond our own small selves." Shaw summed up her view by quoting Henry Nouwen discussing writing: "The writing itself reveals what's alive; it opens up spaces in each of us; it requires real, active trust. Once we dare, we give away the few thoughts that come to us; we discover how much we have to give away."

L'Engle told of a character named Joshua who "wrote himself into" one of her books. In the story, Joshua *has* to die, said L'Engle. An editor didn't like that. No, he has to die, L'Engle insisted. Why? asked the editor. "I don't know, he just does; I can't change the story." was L'Engle's answer. "It's *that* real," she says. Of course she realized that Joshua is the Hebrew form of the name Jesus; the allusion was obvious.

Such occurances are not to say that you can have loose characters or images running all over the place in a novel or poem, unintegrated into the whole. The writer's skill comes to play in achieving such integration.

Nor does it mean that an editor can't touch your work because the way it is is somehow inevitable and unchangable; or that everything you write — even when you're an established author — is good enough to publish.

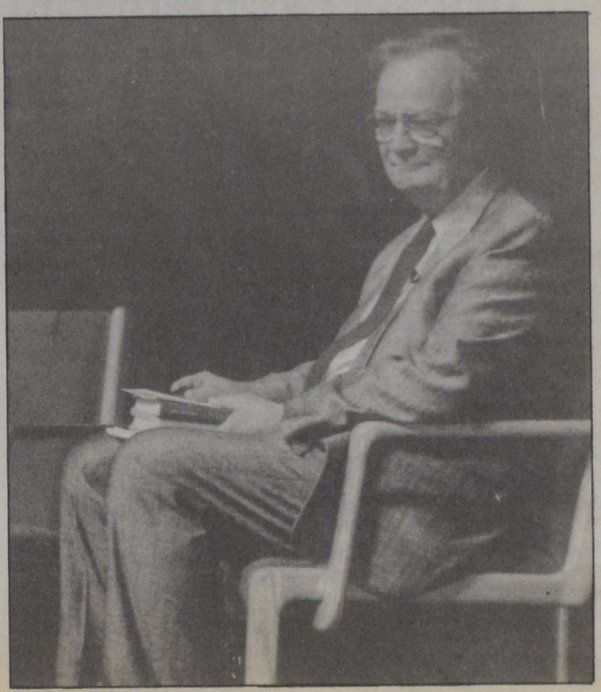
In answer to a question about how to handle writers who don't want their material edited, Luci Shaw, herself an editor, suggested presenting your rationale for making changes that need to be made. But ultimately, if a writer insists that his or her work doesn't need editing, "I wouldn't publish it," she says.

Unborn material

Some authors write quickly and prolifically, but see only a portion of what they write brought to birth. "I've got files full of poems that are in the fetal position," confessed Shaw. L'Engle, too, said she has "at least five times as many discarded pages as finished ones" when she's working on a book.

Rudy Wiebe says he's a slow writer. With some of his work it has taken literally years for a novel plot to germinate in his head. And then more time to carefully craft his story. The only time he tossed something off was when he did try writing "for the market." It was lucrative, he said; but he'll never do it again.

Wiebe spoke of how his "inspiration" has come from what he knows: the German Mennonite community in Saskatchewan in which he grew up, the landscape there, and the history of the area. That's where both his first novel, *Peace Shall Destroy Many* and the more recent *Temptations of Big Bear* come from. The first, from his own people, the latter from the history of the Natives who lived for centuries on the land the Mennonites came to in this century.



Donald Hall

There was other Canadian representation at the festival. English professor and novelist Hugh Cook from Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario, opened the festival by reading some of his work (Cook was joined by colleague James Schaap from Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa, who read some of his own work.) Later, Dr.Monika Hilder from Trinity Western University in Vancouver presented a paper on a topic I found most interesting: the child-savior in George McDonald's Princess stories, in C.S. Lewis' *Narnia Chronicles* and in L'Engle's Time trilogy.

She argued that the child heroes or saviors in these works are not conventional, strong, sword-wielding heroes, but rather are based on "the childlike principle of trust and obedience, the 'feminine' principle of submission and self-sacrifice, and on the rejection of realism in favor of a mythic view of the universe." It is those qualities of Beatitude-like meekness that these authors see as constituting real heroism.

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Church

China tries to control religion in Hong Kong

But Lutherans will gather as planned

HONG KONG (EP) — China has announced that it will permit 2,000 delegates of the Lutheran World Foundation to gather in Hong Kong in July 1997, despite its earlier demand that the meeting be postponed.

Hong Kong will go from being a British Colony to being a part of China on July 1, 1997. Chinese officials had expressed concern that the Lutheran event, planned for July 8-16, would be too close to the change of sovereignty.

But a Chinese official in Hong Kong said China will honor its promise to protect religious freedom and freedom of assembly in Hong Kong. Zhang Junsheng, deputy director of China's official Xinhua News Agency, said the Lutheran group was welcome and encouraged other such groups to meet in the region. He insisted that Chinese concerns about the meeting had nothing to do with religious freedom issues.

A Chinese official originally said the Chinese government should have been consulted about a meeting scheduled for after the takeover. But Hong Kong officials said they saw no need to seek Chinese approval for a meeting that is a routine matter under Hong Kong's current system.

The English-language *South China Morning Post* criticized Chinese opposition to the meeting, saying, "No matter when the Lutherans want to hold their assembly, they should no more have to seek permission to hold a conference than business leaders should need a license to hold meetings."

Christmas and Easter to stay

Chinese opposition to the meeting had led to concerns that the government will try to suppress religious activity after taking over Hong Kong. Beijing promised to give Hong Kong a great deal of autonomy for at least 50 years after the takeover.

In a related story, the Chinese committee set up to rule Hong Kong after China takes back the British territory has determined that Christmas and Easter can stay, but Hong Kong's elected legislature has to go. "Christmas and Easter will also be marked as holidays, along with other public holidays such as one in August to mark victory in the Anti-Japanese War," said the Xinhua news agency. Good Friday will also be retained as a holiday, in deference to the Christian influence in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's Legislative Council, elected in 1995, will be abolished, and replaced by a provisional legislature formed under Chinese control.

North American Christians raise concern over Nigeria

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — Tension is rising over the worsening economic and political situation in Nigeria. In February the co-ordinator for social justice and hunger action of the Christian Reformed Church sent an "action alert" to CRC pastors. The co-ordinator, Peter Vander Meulen, noted the 75-year association of the CRC with Nigerian churches and requested action from the CRC.

Vander Meulen urged the pastors to address local and national officials in the U.S. and Canada, and to raise local awareness through letters to newspapers. He compared Nigeria, with its 100 million people, to Rwanda, with only six million, and suggested that a major crisis is looming unless we act now to try to prevent it.

On the Canadian side, the CRC's Committee for Contact with the Government has sent a special appeal to Canadian churches, with suggestions as to how they might address the issue in the Canadian context.

The same committee has also placed the matter on the agenda for the Reformed Ecumenical Council, whose assembly will meet in June in Grand Rapids. Vander Meulen remarked that the REC could play a leadership role in developing a common Reformed approach to help the churches and people of Nigeria.

A 'rogue' state

There has been a growing awareness of Nigeria's problems since the execution last November of human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa. Eight other Ogoni activists died with him. Some government sanctions have been imposed, and the U.S. withdrew its ambassador for a short time. However, both the U.S. and South Africa have quietly sent their ambassadors back.

The U.S. government has also singled out Nigeria as one of the world's worst abusers of human rights. In a recent human rights overview, the U.S. government linked it with "rogue" states, such as Burma, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya and North Korea. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher pointed out it was no coincidence that Burma and Nigeria are also major players in the world's illegal drug trade.

The ultimate Reader's Digest condensation?

WESTPORT, Conn. (EP) — There are children's Bibles and toddler's Bibles. Where will it end? Reader's Digest may have the answer with its new *Baby's First Bible*, a 16-page hardcover book designed for the pre-preschool set. The book includes a carrying handle, cutout sections, and interactive features, such as suggestions that children sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus, or roar like a lion during the tale of Noah's Ark. Sally Lloyd Jones, editorial director for the religious division of Reader's Digest Young Families, admits that such a small book can't really be considered a "Bible," but said the idea is to help children get comfortable with the idea of the Bible even before they are old enough to read the real thing.

Baby's First Bible has 12 stories, some of which are told in just one sentence. For instance, the book of Daniel becomes, "Daniel prayed to God and not to men, and God kept Daniel safe in the lion's den." Other stories, such as Jonah, were omitted because they defined such condensation. The book is designed to be read to children from infancy, and the easy-carry handle helps to give them a sense of ownership, says *Reader's Digest*.

The Bible must break out of our private Christian cultures

TORONTO (CANADIAN BIBLE SOCIETY) — As the world stands poised on the threshold of a new millennium, the Christian church must capture a fresh vision for how the Word of God can shape the destiny toward which we are moving.

This was a central theme arising from the Forum of Bible Agencies consultation held in Edinburgh, Scotland, April 16-18. The forum contends that the Christian church approaching the third millennium has a greater hunger for the Word of God than at any previous time in history, yet many Western churches have a limited vision for the work of Scripture translation and distribution.

According to a report issued by the forum, many parts of the world face a present Scripture crisis which threatens to reverse church growth and shrivel Christian spirituality. The report states that three out of every four new converts worldwide lack their own copy of the Bible and some 300 million people are still without a single biblical book in their own language. Only 15 per cent of Western Christians have read through the entire Bible.

"In the Western world we have privatized the Bible," explained forum co-chairperson Reverend Fergus Macdonald, general secretary of the National Bible Society of Scotland, and one of the delegates from the United Bible Societies. "We too often use the Bible as a microscope in our own private Christian cultures, and fail to appreciate its potential as a telescope to help us see and understand the world."

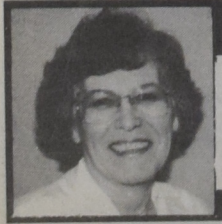
Bible gives big picture

Macdonald challenged the 16 Bible organizations attending the consultation to think beyond marketing the Bible as a book which meets personal felt needs. He said: "It also provides mankind with the big picture of life.

Rondal Smith of Pioneer Bible Translators presented to the consultation the new possibilities now available in communicating via the Internet.

"Through today's modern technology — the Internet and the World Wide Web — we are looking at nothing less than a new Gutenberg revolution," contends Smith. "It will fully revolutionize the way we do our work. One can now literally scan the libraries and museums of the world in search of information via the Internet. The critical question is: What shall one find?"

The Forum of Bible Agencies is exploring the development of a central information bank which will place all Scripture sources worldwide on the Internet. A "Bibles in print" homepage is envisioned, which will list all Scripture resources currently available by the 14 Bible agencies which are members of the forum.



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Friend

Wayne Brouwer CHAPTER & VERSE

"And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,' and he was called God's friend" (James 2:23).

When Pepper Rodgers was struggling through a terrible season as football coach at UCLA, everything in his life seemed to be going wrong. No one would speak with him. Even his home life was on edge and uncertain. "My dog was my only friend," he said. In fact, he mentioned that to his wife one day, telling her that a man really needs *two* friends. He was hoping to get a little sympathy from her. Do you know what she did? She went out and bought him another dog!

Going home to ourselves

The Chinese have a saying: "When men are friendly even water is sweet!" And so it is. The character of the world is changed when friends surround us. Even our own selves warm up to greater things. "The best mirror is an old friend," says an old proverb. When poet John Dryden penned an elegy in honor of his late friend Eleonora, this is what he said:

The Souls of Friends like Kings in Progress are;/Still in their own, though from the Palace far;/Thus her Friend's Heart her Country Dwelling was,/A sweet Retirement to a coarser place:/Where Pomp and Ceremonies enter'd not;/Where Greatness was shut out, and Bus'ness well forgot.

That "Country Dwelling" of the friend's heart is powerfully revealed in a story Scott Camp tells of a university student who was working on a doctorate investigating the social culture of the Navajo people. For a full year the young man lived with a Navajo family, participating in all the regimen and rituals of their lives.

Since Navajo households are often intergenerational, the grandmother, a wizened old woman, was matriarch of the home. She moved slowly and quietly among them, ever-present even without speaking. Though she knew little English, she soon became fast friends with the doctoral student. Somehow they shared a communication that needed few words. And when the time finally came for him to leave, she uttered a single sentence that gathered into it the essence of what it means to be soul-mates. She said: "I like me best when I'm with you!"

Echoing God's heart

Queen Victoria of England said something similar when she reflected on two great men who had served the country for terms as prime minister. Of William Gladstone she opined, "When I am with him, I feel I am with one of the most important leaders in the world." Disraeli, too, made her feel "as if I am one of the most important leaders of the world."

A good friend brings out the best in us. Certainly God brought out the best in Abraham. That's understandable. But notice carefully the way James puts it. He doesn't say that God was Abraham's best friend, even though that was certainly the case. Instead, he tells us that Abraham was called a friend of God. There's something in our relationship with God that brings out the best in him too.

We call it grace, no matter which way it flows between friends. The *Pioneer Girls Leader's Handbook* says it this way: "A friend hears the song in my heart and sings it to me when my memory fails." Maybe that's why God delights in our music. He'll never forget who he is so long as we keep singing "Amazing Grace."

Wayne Brouwer is senior pastor at Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich.

Reformed Church in America asks liberal minister to recant

SPRING LAKE, Mich. (REC) — A western Michigan pastor has been asked to recant his views or separate from the denomination to which he belongs. The Muskegon Classis of the Reformed Church in America has declared that the views of Rev. Richard Rhem "are not fully supportive of the definite authority of Scripture and salvation through Christ alone."

Rhem is the pastor of the 3,500-member Christ Community Church in Spring Lake, Mich. The church aroused controversy last year when it rented its facilities to the Muskegon Metropolitan Community Church, a church composed largely of homosexuals. That, however, was not the main issue in the judgment against him. Rhem told delegates at the meeting that he would not say "there is no salvation apart from that mediated by Jesus Christ as understood in the Christian tradition."

The action taken is not a removal of Rhem's status as a minister. The classis has asked him to recant his views. He said at the meeting he was not prepared to do so. The church then asked him to negotiate a peaceful separation, but Rhem said he was undecided what action he would take. He could voluntarily resign or insist that the church go through the discipline process. Rhem's congregation supports him and will likely leave the RCA if Rhem leaves.

This is the first time since 1929 that an RCA minister has been asked to separate for theological reasons. The previous case involved a pastor who rejected infant baptism and eventually transferred to a Baptist church.

RCA denominational General Secretary Wesley Granberg-Michaelson attended the meeting. He addressed the meeting briefly, noting that he had written a pastoral letter on the matter to his own executive committee. He told the classis it had the right to take the action, since it serves as "corporate bishop," but he cautioned them to consider the impact of this decision on the denomination.

Catholic bishop gets tough on unorthodoxy

LINCOLN, Neb. (EP) — A Roman Catholic Bishop in Nebraska says he will excommunicate church members who belong to groups which advocate positions opposed by the church. The 12 targeted groups include Planned Parenthood, the Hemlock Society, and Catholics for a Free Choice. "Membership in these organizations or groups is always perilous to the Catholic Faith and most often is totally incompatible with the Catholic Faith," Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz wrote in the diocesan newspaper.

Catholics in the diocese were given until April 15 to resign from such groups. After that date they will not be permitted to receive communion, and one month later they will be excommunicated. The warning was issued partly in response to an announcement that the liberal advocacy group Call to Action planned to organize a Nebraska chapter. A spokesperson for the archdiocese said the threat of excommunication was intended "to call persons back to the faith rather than to punish." Only the Pope has the power to overturn Bruskewitz's decision.

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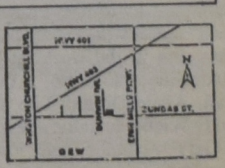

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Feature

Writers' conference leaves

Marian Van Til

Two years ago, Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., held its first Festival of Faith and Writing, jointly conceived by the members of the English department. One hundred fifty people came; pretty good for a first effort. The English department, led by chair Gary Schmidt, decided a biennial event would be helpful to aspiring Christian writers.

On the basis of the reputations of those English professors as scholars and writers, and on Calvin's strong academic reputation, a second three-day writers' conference, held April 11-13, was able to attract a veritable who's who of novelists and poets. We learned from and were enthralled by writers known and respected not just among Christians, but in the world at large: Madeleine L'Engle, Donald Hall, Annie Dillard, Lee Smith, Rudy Wiebe, to name a few.

Gary Schmidt had low-key expectations for this conference. There would be perhaps 300 registrants, his department thought, he told a friend and me. He paused before the punch line. "There are 900 people here!"

Though Calvin's students were still on campus, the college proved it could readily accommodate an additional thousand people. And being good Calvinists (i.e., relishing the conducting of one's affairs decently and in good order), the conference was a model of conscientious organization.

MARIAN VAN TIL PHOTOS

Madeleine L'Engle : not a children's writer

The featured writers didn't theorize about how they integrate their faith with their writing so much as demonstrate it by talking about their life's journeys and their writing.

While some of us were sitting at the feet of the writers in the Fine Arts Center, others were concentrating on "academic sessions" in a smaller auditorium or theatre, mentally comparing the papers presented by three literature scholars on three related topics; or we were participating in workshops or "round tables" in the college chapel or chapel undercroft.

Learning by example

The featured writers didn't theorize about how they integrate their faith with their writing so much as demonstrate it by talking about their life's journeys and their writing.

In keeping with her reputation and output, Madeleine L'Engle drew a huge crowd on the first evening. Funny and self-effacing, at a brisk age of 75 (slightly more) she has some two dozen books to her credit and is still gestating them by the litter.

L'Engle is known best for her Time trilogy which is science fantasy, a wedding of science fiction and fantasy, and which has been billed for children. She steadfastly maintains, however, that she has never written a children's book — if children identify with her books, so will adults. L'Engle writes in a variety of other genres, including non-fiction. (Her just published work *Penguins and Golden Calves* is an essay collection.)

With wit and poignancy L'Engle outlined her autobiographical journey. She is an unconventionally devout woman whose childlike faith becomes obvious as she speaks. She is exuberantly in love with God's creation and it shows in her writing.

Since the age of five, when, philosophically and literarily precocious, she had already written her first story, she has been annoyed with easy answers to the perennially tough questions of the cosmos. (The German theologians had way too many answers, she maintains; on the plus side, they've been a boon to insomniacs.)

L'Engle's probing makes some conservative Christians nervous, if not outright hostile; her science fantasy has been labeled New Age. For her part, L'Engle sees among those Christians a growing fear of the imagination, and that saddens her. It cuts children off from many of the good things God has meant us to explore.

L'Engle published her first works easily, which she assumed was normal. She soon found out how fortunate she had been. When she wrote *A Wrinkle in Time* "no one wanted to touch it," she says. Though fiction, it dealt with real questions, including death and what happens after death. The book didn't fit the picture of a work for children, nor did publishers want to deal with it as adult fiction.

For *10 years* L'Engle wrestled with God about that book and other material she was writing. She told us, "I'd say to God, 'You know this is good stuff, God, and I'm doing it for you. So can't you just let *them* see that it's worth being published?"

That long dry spell taught her greater dependence on God and strengthened her own conviction that she *was* a writer, whether somebody wanted to publish her stuff or not. The drought was broken when *A Wrinkle in Time* was published "at just the right time — God's time," she says.

L'Engle's wit grabbed the audience frequently. My favorite anecdote was one which proved that at least one of her three children had inherited her wit. The family had been living in New England and were on the verge of moving to New York City, where she and her actor husband would better be able to work. Being great animal lovers, the family had seven cats and three dogs. L'Engle's husband forced the family into an impossible decision: they would be allowed to take just one cat and one dog.

This "Sophie's choice" was not lost on their son, then four years old. After his father's pronouncement, the boy solemnly stared up at his father and asked: "And are you going to take just one child too...?"

But his father didn't relent.

'Intellectual and moral firmness'

Many informed critics would call Donald Hall one of the best poets alive today in the U.S. He is a former poet laureate of the State of New Hampshire and has won the Robert Frost Silver Medal. It's astonishing to realize that someone who writes such meaty and poignant poetry also writes essays, textbooks and even children's books. Besides the Frost medal and many other awards, Hall has won the prestigious National Book Critics Circle Award.

Hall is an unassuming New Englander with a startling willingness to be vulnerable and an "intellectual and moral firmness" which characterize him and his writing

For all that, Hall is an unassuming New Englander whose presentation revealed both a startling willingness to be vulnerable and an "intellectual and moral firmness" which his

L'Engle's "Time trilogy" science fantasy stories.

indelible impression

introducer, Calvin English professor Lionel Basney, said characterize him and his writing.

Hall, by all human reckoning, should be dead right now. Several years ago he was diagnosed with that most lethal of diseases, liver cancer. But after giving up part of his liver to surgeons and many prayers to God (no doubt his own, his wife's and those of many other Christians) he's still here.

Donald Hall: an unabashed evangelist of poetry.

In the meantime, by a strange twist of providence, his wife, Jane Kenyon, contracted leukemia. It has been just a year since she died. Kenyon was an excellent poet in her own right.

Hall didn't tell us of his own grave illness; he would no doubt think it maudlin or too personal to mention (but word gets around). He mentioned only Jane's death, and that he would read a couple of her poems which he thought best expressed her faith.

Let evening come

Hall read a couple of his own unpublished poems as well. "Without" captures achingly the endless, mind-numbing, spirit-sapping days and nights of living through the terminal illness of someone you love deeply. The second poem Hall wrote two weeks after Jane died.

Hall ended his poetry reading with Jane's poem "Let Evening Come." Near death, she could still say, in effect, "God is in his heaven and all's right with the world." Each thing God created is doing what it was created to do; everything has been put away and in its place, so let evening come....

The impact of Hall's and Kenyon's poems on the hushed audience was profound. Donald Hall was still grieving, that was plain; and we were privileged to listen in on some of his struggles, to hear an exquisite testament of a husband's love for his wife. But being a poetic testament it was both specific and universal; and so we were not voyeurs leering at a man in mourning, but fellow human beings who are all vulnerable and subject to the ravages of sin, as well as hopeful of a new creation.

Later, Hall and Lionel Basney carried on a conversation which eventually included audience members. Hall is an unabashed evangelist of poetry who admits that he's "obssessed" with the notion — a false notion, he says emphatically — that poetry is a dying art. "Poetry's been a dying art every year since Homer," he said to audience laughs. "There's a persistant illusion that poetry is dying."

But more people are reading (and writing) poetry today than ever before, he says. He concedes that a few poets may be "deliberately obscure." But he insists that "a lot of the difficulty of poetry is put there by the reader expecting something the poet didn't expect to give, for example, expecting that a poem must rhyme."

Surprises

Two other prominent writers held their audiences captive in unique ways: Annie Dillard and Lee Smith.

Dillard has written 10 books and won the Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction in 1975. She has also won grants from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts.

Dillard, who lives in Connecticut, is a Catholic who has been termed a mystic by critics in our material age. She says she writes primarily for agnostics and atheists because she wants them to see that there is a spiritual world.

Dillard in person is a surprise, said my friend Darlene Meyering (I had to miss Dillard's presentation). "If you've read *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* you'd think she would be genteel and introspective," said Darlene. "But she was hard-crusted" — an impression strengthened by her low, husky, smoker's voice. And her introspection was cynical, though legitimately directed at things that deserve lampooning.

Dillard presented three different takes on birth. First, with China as the setting, she used birth as a metaphor for the modern revelation of archaeological remains of ancient warriors.

Then it was on to the Holy Land and the Church of the Nativity. Dillard's biting description of the crass commercialism of such places highlighted the fact that they are anything but holy. It was only after she ran back alone and put her hands where the Baby Jesus was supposed to have lain, that she could quietly ponder the Birth and feel the place had some worth.

Dillard's third look at birth was a devastating and funny critique of the "baby assembly line" that is still all too common in contemporary childbirth. Dillard has an uncanny ability to describe both nature and events which she has experienced.

Though the conference's heavy schedule was tiring, the event was like spending a few days at a resort for the mind.

The "sleeper" of the conference was Lee Smith. Though she is widely known in the American South, many conferees were unfamiliar with her work, much of which is informed by her upbringing in rural Virginia and by life in Appalachia. Getting to know her was a great pleasure for her audience.

Annie Dillard says she writes primarily for agnostics and atheists because she wants them to see that there is a spiritual world.

"She's a fabulous storyteller," says Darlene, who was already a fan of Smith's. Smith's stories are based on her own life, and she puts a unique and appealing spin on common experiences.

Smith's impact on the audience was evident within hours. "Every bookstore in Grand Rapids sold out of her works after she spoke," reports Darlene.

Though the conference's heavy schedule was tiring, the event was like spending a few days at a resort for the mind. Ancaster, Ont., novelist Hugh Cook went further; he was so inspired by his fellow writers that he called it "heaven."

"I could do this in heaven, or on the New Earth; and it could go on forever!" he said.

However one describes it, the conference inspired readers to read more and writers to write more. It rekindled many love affairs with poetic language, and for that most basic human art, story telling. In doing so, it elicited thanks and praise to and for the Word who became flesh and dwelled among us.

Features

Cheerful bookmarks make life worth living

Gertie Pool

In the span of 10 years Marie Vos, 87-year-old resident at the Ebenezer Senior Citizens Home in Abbotsford, saw the humble beginnings of her missionary project grow into a global Christian mission service.

It all started when Marie was sick one day and received a colorful bookmark with a Bible text printed on it from one of her friends. "I remember I appreciated it so very much, and after I'd studied it for a while I thought, 'I can make them too!'" says Marie.

After making some bookmarks for relatives and friends Marie's thoughts took wider range. She contacted the Ministry To Seafarers run by the Christian Reformed Church. When they accepted her offer Marie began her single-handed mass production.

COURTESY GERTIE POOL

Marie Vos displays her treasures

Has made 10,000

"I aim to send 1,000 bookmarks every year. So far I've sent about 10,000 away to the Vancouver Harbour Ministry where Chaplain Simon Wolfert uses them in his ministry to foreign sailors on ships anchored in the Vancouver harbor," says Marie.

Marie's bookmarks are made from scratch. Throughout the year Marie collects aluminum foil from flower pots and gathers birthday, Christmas, Easter and special occasion cards whenever possible.

In her cozy little room at the Ebenezer Home she spends countless hours cutting colorful flowers from the cards and creating her own ideas with imitation greenery.

Nestled amongst boxes with thousands of colorful flowers and green imitation leaves Marie cuts 6 by 2 inch strips from Kellog's Corn Flakes boxes saved by the Ebenezer staff. She then covers the strips with aluminum foil and glues a neatly typed Bible text on each one in both English and Tagalog for the Filipinos. Marie's creative talents begin to shine when she tastefully decorates the bookmarks with flowers and green stems and leaves.

When this is done, Marie places the markers on cut strips of colored adhesive backing and puts on the finishing touch by sealing a clear adhesive layer over the top.

Looking over her selection Mary states, "If I can help to reach only one person to accept Jesus Christ as his or her Savior, it's truly been worth-while to me."

Gertie Pool is a long-term care aid at Ebenezer Senior Citizens Home in Abbotsford, B.C.

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When death comes, your friends need you

John Tissot

Recently my friend Karl told me his father is dying of cancer. I told Karl how sorry I was, and when we see each other I express my concern. What, I wondered, would I tell Karl and what would I do for him when his father is gone? I'm not good at all in this kind of a situation.

So I sent away for a pamphlet which might help me. Reading it, I see that I can't follow all the suggestions, but there are some things I can do:

** Call your friend as soon as you hear about the death. Just hearing from a friend helps. Start by saying, "I'm sorry," and offer help.*

** When death comes to a friend's family, our society has built cliches such as "He's out of his pain," or "He's with God now." Use these as a crutch if you must, but simple honest words are better.*

** Listen. If your friend wants to talk, be there. Don't force the conversation toward or away from the death. Be a follower.*

** Offer to make calls. He or she may get tired of taking calls or making them, and having to do so may be painful. Here's where you can help.*

** Your friend may need help in getting through daily living. If she's old, she may need someone to do shopping and cooking. If he's young and has children, he may need you to drive the children to school or to the dentist.*

** If you can't do anything else, send a note. We can buy sympathy cards at the drug store, but we should personalize them if we can. The closer you are to the grieving friend, the more personal you can be. This may be just the time to tell your friend how valuable his or her friendship is to you.*

** Call your friend regularly. Invite him or her to do things with you. If you have been in the custom of inviting him or her over for an evening every month or so, now would be a good time to make it every couple of weeks for a while.*

** Tell your friend you are there for him or her for as long as you are needed, but don't make any promises you can't keep. The let-down will be that much greater.*

The advice in the pamphlet also covers the problems that arise when there are children in the family. Did a mother or father die? A grandparent? A brother or sister? What do adults tell children in this situation?

** Children know part of what happened without explanations, so the adults must tell the truth. Children will find out sooner or later, and shielding them by misguiding them will be seen as lying, and lying leads to loss of trust.*

** Children may ask questions in such a way that they don't reveal their fears. In this situation, ask them what they think and what they feel. Some questions children ask, or are afraid to ask, are these: Did I cause the death? Will I die of the same illness? Will I die when I'm the same age? Will I be punished for thinking bad thoughts about other people?*

** Explain what happens at funerals. If the children do go to the funeral, the situation will be less confusing and less frightening.*

** Libraries have books that help children understand death and funerals. A friend could help by looking for such a book.*

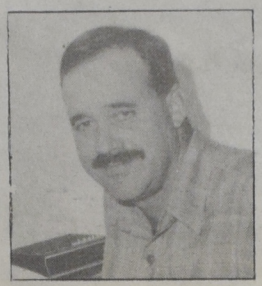
Well, Karl, I know the time is coming when you will need the support of your friends. I'm better equipped now to support you than I was before. I feel more confident. I'll try not to let you down.

John Tissot is a free lance writer who lives in Carpinteria, Calif.

Canadian beef industry had better get packing

Agricultural Housekeeping

Maynard VanderGalien



The only glimmer of hope for Canadian beef farmers facing another few years of depressed cattle prices is for our packing industry to get better. It must, if we want to replace beef that is coming in from Australia and New Zealand.

That's the message John Ross, the assistant director of the red meat section of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, had for a group of Ontario beef producers who are concerned about the amount of beef being imported into Canada. (He discussed a report compiled by the Beef Industry and Trade Development Committee.)

Ross said Canada is a major exporter of beef and veal. Nevertheless, it imports considerable quantities of "manufacturing" beef from other countries, particularly Australia and New Zealand. Most of this manufacturing beef comes from grass-fed cattle and is used by Canadian processors to make hamburger patties and smoked delicatessen meats.

Ross told us the Australian farmers receive no government subsidy and the farmers are not paid much for their livestock, but their beef is very good. "No tangy cattle," he said.

Under NAFTA there are no barriers to imports of beef from the U.S. or Mexico, but all other suppliers are subject to the global Tariff Rate Quota of 76,500 tonnes.

Canadian beef not consistently good

In 1994, 113,000 tonnes of non-NAFTA beef was imported into Canada to satisfy the Canadian processing system because they had "given up" on Canadian beef. They no longer believed Canadian beef would work in their operations and had been receiving beef from off-shore that was not only competitively priced, but also met all their needs, said Ross.

For retailers, he said, the need for box-to-box consistency is paramount. If the retailer is dealing with a 60-pound box which is labelled "lean" and the fat content is not right, it can be pulled off the store's shelves by inspectors.

And to the surprise of many veteran beef producers (and me) Ross outlined how there is a higher microbial growth in Canadian beef than in the off-shore beef.

Australia and New Zealand have a long history of catering to the export market. They are very, very clean. Their production lines are a little slower, and they freeze manufacturing beef right away.

Amazing shelf-life

The longest shelf-life achieved in Canada to date for chilled (not frozen) beef is 60 days, and 90 per cent of the North American beef has a shelf life of only 45 days.

"If you're going into Japan with chilled products, you need a 90-day shelf life. We can't do that. But Australia and New Zealand can," he told astonished farmers.

"If your packing techniques were improved, it could put us on par with the off-shore beef," said Ross.

Consumers' shopping practices in the Pacific Rim countries are not like those in North America. People don't have big freezers and many shop daily.

Gradual improvements

Ross said the North American packing industry is slowly getting better. Improvements are filtering into the industry. And he had some kind words for some of the fast-foods restaurants. McDonald's improved the way beef patties are produced after the serious hamburger disease (Escherichia coli or E. Coli for short) in the Jack in the Box restaurant chain in the U.S. a few years ago.

McDonald's corporation got together with their suppliers of hamburger patties and put new guidelines in place. Ross said most fast food restaurants are very food-safety conscience after that U.S. incident hospitalized 200 people.

Len Hopkins, MP for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, said he is in discussion with federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Ralph Goodale to draft up a private member's bill that would force our packing industry to upgrade and meet more stringent standards. That could be the key to improved markets for Canadian beef, he said.

Maynard Vander Galien farms in Renfrew, Ont., and attends many agricultural meetings. He is often surprised at the things he learns at meetings.

Welsh lambs cloned from single embryo

CC FILES

Marian Van Til

EDINBURGH — Scientists at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh have cloned two Welsh lambs from one embryo, reports *The Guardian Weekly*. The cloning was done by devising a way to multiply cells, take out the nuclei, and fuse them into unfertilized eggs which can then be implanted in ewes acting as surrogate mothers. Cloning of mice and large farm animals has already been done, but the number of potential offspring was small. With the Roslin method there is a possibility for a huge number of identical farm animals to be walking the earth, the original chosen for its "ideal characteristics." The scientists also hope to be able to genetically engineer new qualities for the desired type of fleece and meat into sheep and cattle.

Brave New World

Roslin researchers forced cultured cells from Welsh mountain sheep embryoes to multiply while each cell was still capable of developing into a whole sheep. They then "starved" the cells of serum to make them inactive, and fused the nuclei into unfertilized eggs whose nuclei had been removed. The embryos were then implanted into Scottish blackface ewes.

Researcher Ian Wilmut asserts that "what we appear to have established is a system where you can have tens of thousands of donors which are all genetically identical."

There are hazards, however. As Tim Radford of *The Guardian* puts it: "The work opens up vistas of livestock farmed to precise supermarket specifications; of fleece-bearers 'programmed' to the demands of the woollen trade; of genetically altered, standardized farm animals working as pharmaceutical factories."

In addition, the identical sheep could all fall prey to a disease and be wiped out by it.

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Nature

'Wild Lady' comes back to the wild...

The widow *Shibula* ("Wild Lady"), a lonely Black rhino cow of a very rare subspecies, was pining in Portugal's Lisbon Zoo a few years ago when she had a special visitor.

He was Dr. Anthony Hall-Martin, director of Research and Development at South Africa's National Parks Board — and his chance encounter with *Shibula* was the beginning of a remarkable conservation story.

On his return to South Africa, Dr. Hall-Martin, approached Lagamed, corporate sponsors of environmental projects, with a plan to bring *Shibula* home to southern Africa (she had originally come from Namibia). There were only 18 members of her subspecies left in South-Africa, and Dr. Hall-Martin envisioned a breeding program to increase their numbers.

So began the Augrabies Falls National Park Project.

In exchange for 32 animals (including elephant, White rhino, and antelope) provided by the National Parks Board, *Shibula* was released from the Lisbon Zoo to embark on her two-week journey, sponsored by Lagamed, to the Augrabies Falls National Park, in the rugged terrain of Northern Cape province.

She was accompanied on the voyage to Cape Town by her keeper, Carlos Augusto, and National Parks Board veterinary surgeon Dr. Cobus Raath, and completed the trip on board a South African Air Force Hercules transport plane and, finally, a truck.

But that was only the beginning. Now *Shibula* had to be reacclimatised to the harsh climatic conditions, weaned off her zoo food so that she would browse naturally, and be introduced in stages to other rhinos so that she would be accepted into their community.

In all, that process took seven months.

It was to have a very happy outcome. Just 33 months after rejoining the rhino community at Augrabies Falls, *Shibula* gave birth to a female calf, which was named *Dundagos* or *Dundi* for short (meaning "We have achieved" in Nama).

They had, indeed, achieved. This was a world's first. Never before had a "tame" Black rhino from a zoo been released into the wild and produced a calf.

Meanwhile, the National Parks Board had again approached Lagamed, with a proposal to acquire land to increase the size of Augrabies by more than half, in order to accommodate offspring of the breeding program. With the cooperation of the David Shepherd Conservation Foundation, along with the environmental television program 50/50, the corporation launched a fundraising drive which brought in about $250,000.

COURTESY LAGAMED

Shibula with her daughter Dundi home on the range in the Augrabies Falls national park.

Just as *Shibula* inspired the first expansion of the Augrabies reserve, so *Dundi* has been the inspiration for a second. A number of additional corporate sponsors have come on board to accomplish this.

The expansion project has been good for people as well as rhinos. Some 60 families — about 300 Nama and mixed-raced people — who were evicted from their land in the area in the days of apartheid, have returned. Some are grazing sheep in the vicinity of the reserve proper, others are renting out their land for expansion of the park, and some are becoming involved in the activities of the reserve and its tourism spin-off.

By the way, *Shibula* and *Dundi* are in fine fettle, thank you, and *Shibula* is expecting another baby this coming October.

Reprinted with permission from The Rainbow, published by the High Commission for South Africa in Canada.

Park site identified for Manitoba

Kevin McNamee

A combination of three natural areas have been identified by Parks Canada and Manitoba Natural Resources as a potential park to represent the Manitoba Lowlands natural region of the national parks system. The proposal focuses on the protection of 1,489 square kilometres of wilderness in the Long Point region, and an additional 1,352 square kilometres around the Limestone Bay area of northern Lake Winnipeg.

A number of islands totalling 136 square kilometres near Hecla Provincial Park is the third component of the proposed Interlake national park.

Manitoba's Natural Resources Minister Albert Dreidger and Canada's Heritage Minister Sheila Copps released their "Vision for an Interlake National Park in the Manitoba Lowlands" after meeting in Winnipeg in mid-February. The study culminates almost four years of work by the two governments to identify a national park for the Manitoba Lowlands, one of the 17 unrepresented natural regions in the national parks system. Canadians are now being asked to provide comments to the two governments.

The Long Point component is the core area of the proposed park, providing a land bridge connecting Lake Winnipeg to Lake Winnipegosis, two of the largest freshwater lakes in the world. It encompasses moose, elk, woodland caribou, and deer ranges that do not occur anywhere else in the Manitoba Lowlands. Ten rare species of plants, including the chamomile-leafed grape fern, ram's-head lady's slipper, and the Menzies catchfly, are also present, as well as bald eagle and sandhill crane nesting sites, and a colony of endangered piping plovers.

The Limestone Bay unit encompasses a portion of the Lake Winnipeg-Limestone Bay area, and contains important spawning habitat for walleye. The 21-kilometre-long spit separating the bay from the lake is one of the longest of its type in Canada. The escarpment cliffs along the edge mark the old shores of glacial Lake Agassiz. Wavecut caves are common along the base of the escarpment; it is the only part of the park known to contain caves carved by centuries of water erosion of the limestone bedrock.

ROGER TURKNE

Limestone cliffs bordering Lake Winnipeg

Missing from the Limestone Bay portion of the national park proposal are adjacent caves which provide hibernation havens for relatively large colonies of little brown and Keen's bats. Although these caves are likely the most northerly wintering areas for bats in Canada, the Manitoba government decided to exclude a large portion of the Limestone area because of mineral potential. It is also insisting that a provincial all-weather road be set aside in the Long Point unit to provide Repap Manitoba, a forestry company, access to timber south of the proposed park.

In the coming months, the Canadian Nature Federation will review the boundary proposals for Interlake national park to ensure they adequately represent the natural features of the Manitoba Lowlands, and are of a size sufficient to maintain the ecological integrity of the separate units.

Reprinted from Nature Alert, *publication of Canadian Nature Federation.*

Classifieds

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Marriage/Birth

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Al and Ann Zandberg wish to announce two joyous occasions.

On March 8, 1996, their daughter

WYNNE-ANN

was married to

RON HUININK

They are now residing in Hamilton, Ont.

On April 4, 1996, the Lord blessed Allan and Kerri Zandberg and big sister Julianne with the birth of a healthy baby

NICHOLAS ALLAN

7 lbs., 12 oz., in Chatham, Ont.

A grandson for us and Ed and Carol Koke of Chatham, Ont.

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Sjoerd and Boukje Baarda (nee Visser) on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary!

Sneek, Fr. Wellandport, Ont.

1936 May 10 1996

"Thus far the Lord has helped us" (1 Sam. 7:12).

Grateful to our heavenly Father, who has sustained them with His care, we look forward to celebrating the 60th wedding anniversary, D.V., of our parents and grandparents,

SJOERD (GEORGE) and BOUKJE (BARBARA) BAARDA
(nee VISSER)

We pray that God will continue to be near to them and bless them in the future as He has done in the past. With love from their children and grandchildren,

Chester & Agnes Baarda — Langley, B.C.
Marilyn & Cliff, Murray (with Jesus), Brian & Monica, Sandra & John, Nancy, Kevin
George & Katie Baarda — Gadshill, Ont.
Gwendolyn & Keith, Heather & Greg, Jennifer & John, Jessica, George, Heidi, Amy
Ann Baarda — Burlington, Ont.
Cor & Ann Baarda — Acton, Ont.
Steven & Lori, Cathy & Theo, Edward
Eb & Dick Bokma — Fenwick, Ont.
Sherry, Tracy & Daryl, Brent, Leanne, Karen, Jeff
Frank & Nelly Baarda — Vineland
Rachel, Jonathan
Dorothy & Ralph Janssens — Wellandport, Ont.
Darrell, Marcia, Melanie, Kimberley
Tina & Dave Vanderwier — Wellandport, Ont.
Jamie & Christine, Lorraine & Ben, Timothy, Nathaniel, Tammy, Sarah
Gerty Baarda — Alliston, Ont.
Ron & Wendy Baarda — Grimsby, Ont.
Rick, Ethan
Dan & Valerie Baarda — Beamsville, Ont.
Barbara, Belinda, Manley, Emily
Dick & Sabie Baarda — Grimsby, Ont.
Anthony, Cayla

and 13 great-grandchildren.

Friends are invited to an open house on Saturday, May 11, 1996, from 2-4 p.m., D.V., at Covenant Chr. School, Smithville, Ont.

Best wishes only, please.

Home address: R.R. #3, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0

1926 May 6 1996

With praise and thanksgiving to our Lord we hope to celebrate, D.V., the **70th wedding anniversary** of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

WILLIAM and MARIE DIELEMAN
(nee DIELEMAN)

May the Lord continue to be near to them.

With love from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Kay & Everett Hooyer — Dresden
Jane Dieleman — Chatham
Adrian & Attie Dieleman — Thamesville
Marie & John Verburg — Chatham
Jim & Ann Dieleman — Thamesville
Wilma & Jake VanGurp — Brownsville

They have 24 grandchildren and 42 great-grandchildren.

The Lord is good and his love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations.

Home address: 21 McGeorge Ave., Chatham, ON N7M 3Z3

1971 April 30 1996

1 Corinthians 13

ALFRED and MARGARET DYKSTRA
(nee SLOTEGRAAF)

along with our children;

Jayne, Lynda, Lorraine, Bryan and Caroline

invite our friends and relatives to an open house on May 11, 1996, from 7:30-10:30 p.m. at the Clinton & District Chr. School, 243 Princess St. E., Clinton, Ont.

Best wishes only please.

Address: R.R. #4, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0

1946 May 7 1996

With thanksgiving to God, we joyfully announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

PIETER and MAAIKE HOLTROP
(nee VAN DER ZWAAG)

Your love for each other, for all of us and for our heavenly Father has been a wonderful blessing for us. May He continue to keep you in His care. With love from your family.

Syd Holtrop — Hamilton, Ont.
Ida Porteous — Hamilton, Ont.
Paul, Stephanie
Henry & Lynne Holtrop — Mt. Hope, Ont.
Karen, Kristi, Patti, Julie, Aimee, Lori, Jamie
Shirley Holtrop — Hamilton, Ont.
John & Joanne Holtrop — Mt. Hope, Ont.
Evan, Christine
William & Wilma Reeves — Mississauga, Ont.
Spencer, Rachael

Home address: 3234 Homestead Dr., Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0

Friends and family are invited to an open house, on May 11, 1996, from 2-4 p.m., at Southern Pines Golf & Country Club, 8453 Airport Rd. E., Mount Hope, Ont.

Best wishes only.

1946 May 16 1996

With great joy and thankfulness to our Lord, we announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents

HARMEN and ANNA KLOOSTERMAN
(nee HARMSMA)

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning, great is Thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22,23).

We thank God for His faithfulness to you in the past and pray for His abiding love and care in the future.

Our love and congratulations:

Henk & Evelyn Van Schepen
Jonathan, Joanna
John & Virginia Kloosterman
Charlie & Grace Paas
Christie, Dale, Anita
Steven & Greta Golick
Robert, Danyse
Paul & Rita Kloosterman
Heather, Brian, Pamela, Valerie, Kevin

All friends and relatives are invited to an open house on Saturday, May 25, 1996, D.V., at the Joshua Bates Centre, Main St., Athens, Ont., from 2-4 p.m. Best wishes only.

Home address: P.O. Box 483, Athens, ON K0E 1B0

1951 May 11 1996

"...Love one another deeply, from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22b).

The children and grandchildren of

ANDY and RITA KNIBBE
(nee SCHURINGA)

are delighted to wish them a joyful 45th anniversary.

May God continue to bless your lives together, that you may celebrate many more years of your love for one another.

Sylvia & John Smeenk — Belleville, Ont.
Kimberly, Jeff, Brent, Andrea
Marilyn & Lawrence Leavitt — London, Ont.
Kristie, Megan, Ryan
John & Charene Knibbe — Calgary, Alta.
Rose, Justin, Amber
Harry & Coby Knibbe — Aylmer, Ont.
Anthony, Mike, Jamie, Amy
Winnie & Pat Smith — Calgary, Alta.
Matthew, Karen, Kristen
Karen & Ray Louter — Mount Hope, Ont.
Jordan, Paige, Stefan, baby due in May

Address: 8445 English Church Rd., Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0

60th Wedding Anniversary!

On April 26, 1936,

KARL and JOHANNA PRINS

were united in marriage in Hoogeveen, the Netherlands. To celebrate this joyous occasion, there will be an open house on May 11, 1996, at Holland Chr. Homes, Harmony Hall, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, Ont., from 2-5 p.m. Best wishes only.

Classifieds

Anniversaries

1946 May 8 1996

"Oh magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together" (Ps.34:3).

WALTER and EUNICE BAKKER
(nee FEKKES)

We are happy and very blessed to celebrate our parents' and grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary. Congratulations and love from all your children and grandchildren.

Peter & Gay Kleine
Henry & Elana, Darren & Carolyn, Joel
Stuart & Elsie Bakker
Shawn & Jannekke, Seth, Krista, Erin
John & Margaret Bakker
Nicole, Melissa, Mark, Michael
Sid & Judy Bakker
Alexia
Jason, Chad, Nathan, Gregory
Harry & Sylvia Huitsing
Lindsey, Jennifer, Suzanne

Open house on May 25, 1996, at West End Chr. Ref. Church, 10015-149 St., Edmonton, Alta., from 2-4:30 p.m.

Home address: #315 Tegler Terrace, 9918-149 Street, Edmonton, AB T5P 4X3

Congratulations to Walter and Eunice Bakker (nee Fekkes) on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary!

Anniversaries

1946 May 25 1996

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

The children of

HAROLD and MARGARET WOUDSTRA
(nee VAN DER WAL)

feel blessed that they are able to celebrate with their parents 50 years of marriage on May 25, 1996.

We thank God for all the years of love in our family and for their beautiful example of servanthood to all God's children wherever they went together in their lives. Mom and Dad we love you and pray God will bless you with many more years.

John & Bonnie — Burlington, Ont.
Melissa, Maggie, Katie
Keith & Cindy — Georgetown, Ont.
Matt, Chris

All welcome to join us at an open house on May 25, 1996, from 2-4 p.m., at the New Street Church, 3422 New Street, Burlington, Ont.

Home address: 2422 Prospect Street, Burlington, ON L7R 2B2

Anniversaries

1956 May 18 1996

It is with great joy and thankfulness to God that we are able to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and Opa and Oma

JOHN and ALICE DE WEERD
(nee VERDOOLD)

We, as a family, pray for many more years of love and happiness to come. With love from their children and grandchildren:

Anne & Bert Mulder
Jason, Jeremy, Melissa, Kevin
Marian & Tony de Boer
Nathan, Aaron, Adam
Chris & Andy
Stephanie, Ryan, Danielle
Sylvia & Al Heyink
Scott, Gregory

Friends and relatives are invited to celebrate with us at an open house to be held in the Exeter Pentecostal Church on Saturday, May 18, 1996, from 2-4 p.m.

Address: R.R. #2, Ailsa Craig, ON N0M 1A0

Anniversaries

Garijp, Fr. St. Thomas, Ont.

1936 May 14 1996

"He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its seasons, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers" (Ps.1:3).

It is with great joy and thankfulness to God that we will celebrate the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents

RAY and SUSAN WYMENGA
(nee SIBMA)

We thank the Lord for all the care and blessings He has provided over the years. May God continue to bless and keep you in his care.

Love and congratulations:

Lou Dykxhoorn — Springfield, Ont.
Charlie & Irene (Daniel, Sandra, Gregory, Karla), Marjorie & George (Crystal, Kalvin, Jamie, Dennis, Carl), Roy & Stacy (Madison), Lawrence
Margaret & Harry VanderKloet — Kentville, N.S.
Trish & Rob (Kaitlyn), Geoff & Lisa, Sonja, Heather & Mike, Melanie, Jessica

Address: 154 First Ave., St. Thomas, ON N5R 4P3

Obituaries

Boskoop Bowmanville
the Neth. Ont.

1915 - 1996

Psalm 91: 11,12

On Wednesday, April 10, 1996, God "set free" our father, opa and great-opa.

FRED KOOY

went home to be with his Lord.

He was predeceased by his wife, Marie Kooy-Bossemeyer (1986).

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren:

Tina & Bill Grootendorst — Bowmanville
Gerry & Janice, Bill & Kim (Ryan, Kristen), Kevin
Henry & Marg Kooy — London
Rodney, Michelle, Philip, Brendan
Art & Chris Kooy — Bowmanville
Dan, Adam
Jean Paton-Kooy — Janetville
Rosemary & Wil VanderLinden — Fonthill
Amy, Nigel, Kyle
Fred & Karen Kooy — Peterborough
Geoff, Bradley, Sonya

The funeral service was held on Saturday, April 13, 1996, at the Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, Bowmanville, Ont., with Rev. M. Abma officiating.

Correspondence address: Tina Grootendorst, 14 Rehder Avenue, Bowmanville, ON L1C 2A1

Obituaries

Dordrecht Barrie
the Neth. Ont.

Dec. 19, 1908 - April 1, 1996

"Blessed are those whose strength is in the Lord."

It is with sadness and yet with the assurance that Dad is with the Lord, that we mourn the loss of our father, opa and great-opa

DIRK VAN DALEN

Predeceased by his loving wife Cornelia Huisman on Sept. 18, 1995.

Dear father of:

Jeannette & Jasper Capelle — Belwood, Ont.
Rennie & Tina Van Dalen — Calgary, Alta.
Dirk & Lucy Van Dalen — Carlisle, Ont.
Toob & Jeanne Van Dalen — Aurora, Ont.
Corrie & George Laidlaw — Pickering, Ont.
Gerard & Rosemary Van Dalen — Barrie, Ont.

Beloved Opa and Great Opa of 13 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

He is survived by one brother, Arie Van Dalen of The Hague, the Netherlands.

The funeral service was held on April 6, 1996, at the First Chr. Ref. Church, Barrie, Ont.

See our Calendar of Events on page 19...

Teachers

ATHENS, Ont.: Athens Chr. School invites applications for a **possible teaching position** in a small **combined Grade 1 and 2** class for the 1996/97 school year. Please send resume to:

Jannie Feenstra, Principal
Athens Chr. School
P.O. Box 264
Athens, ON K0E 1B0
Phone: (613) 924-9500

ALLISTON, Ont.: Alliston Community Chr. School invites applications for a **teaching position** in the **Junior grades**. We require someone with expertise in computers. The ability to teach music, French and Phys.Ed. would be an asset. Please send resume to:

Pastor Harry Zantingh
Box 592
Alliston, ON L9R 1V7
Phone (school): (705) 435-4611

Deadline for applications is **May 24, 1996.**

BELLEVILLE, Ont.: Quinte Chr. High School. We are a small (115 students), dynamic Christian High School located on the shores of beautiful Bay of Quinte in the city of Belleville, Ont. We are inviting applications for a **teaching position** opening for the school year 1996/97. Teaching responsibilities include the areas of history, law, world religions and related fields. Applicants with a Christian college background and a willingness to coach and give leadership in extra-curricular activities will be given preference. A living relationship with Jesus Christ, a love for children and a passion for learning are a must. Please send your applications, with resume to:

The Principal
Quinte Chr. High School
289 Pinnacle Street
Belleville, ON K8N 3B3

SMITHERS, B.C.: Bulkley Valley Chr. Elementary School is in need of **3 teachers** commencing in September 1996. One position will be **half-time in Kindergarten**, one will be **full-time in a combined Grade 1 and 2** and one will be approximately **half-time in the intermediate grades**. Some music qualifications would be a definite advantage to our school. Please send applications and resumes to:

Glenn Ewald, Associate Principal
Box 2117
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0
Phone: (604) 847-9833
Fax: (604) 847-3564

For Rent

APARTMENTS: Redeemer College rents furnished 1-, 2-, and 4-bedroom apartments **May to August.** Enjoy our pastoral setting while visiting the **Hamilton/Niagara/Toronto** region. For excellent daily, weekly and monthly rates, and for reservations, phone **(905) 648-2131, ext. 260.**

Miscellaneous

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Phone: (905) 772-3272

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Hamilton (905) 574-8611

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER

Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue $5.

Write to:
#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

Classifieds

Teachers

BURLINGTON, Ont.: Trinity Chr. School invites applications for a September 1996-March 1997 **maternity leave teaching position** in the **Junior grades**, and applications for a **30% teaching position** in the **intermediate grades** for the 1996-1997 school year. Please send letter of application and resume to:

Mr. Andrew Straatsma, Principal
Trinity Chr. School
650 Walkers Line
Burlington, ON L7N 2E7
Phone: (905) 634-3052
Fax: (905) 634-9382

ST. THOMAS, Ont.: Ebenezer Chr. School is accepting applications for the junior division for the 1996/97 school year. Please forward your resume and application to:

Tony DeKoter, Principal
Ebenezer Chr.School
77 Fairview Ave.
St. Thomas, ON N5R 4X7

WELLANDPORT, Ont.: Wellandport Chr. School invites applications for **possible full- and part-time positions** in the **primary and junior division.** Please forward resume, including a Christian Education Philosophy statement, to:

William Thies, Principal
Wellandport Chr. School
Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0
Phone: (905) 386-6272
Fax: (905) 386-7184

Vacations

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651-4 Ave. E.
Brooks, AB T1R 0H4
Phone: (403) 362-4052 or
(403) 362-2653

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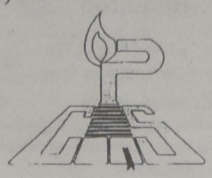
Job Opportunities

PACIFIC CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Victoria, B.C.



Teachers required:
French Grades 8-12
Industrial Education

Send resumes and statements of faith to:
John A. Messelink, Secondary Principal
Pacific Christian School
654 Agnes St., Victoria, BC V8Z 2E6
Phone (604) 479-4532, Fax (604) 479-3511

Miscellaneous

Bethesda Christian Homes
Woodbridge, Ontario

A 39 two- and one-bedroom Senior Apartment Complex, with a separate Care Wing of 60 bed-sitting units, has recently been approved by the Ontario Municipal Board. Construction is expected to start soon. Bethesda is located on a beautiful ravine on a branch of the Humber River, next to the Maranatha CRC. Applications of suitable tenants are now invited. There are still a few openings. If you are interested in a Rental Unit or in a Life-Lease Unit, please contact us as soon as possible. Now is your chance! Contact the office:

Andy Mast, 38 Haslemere Ave.,
Brampton, ON L6W 2X4
or phone/fax (905) 459-2111.

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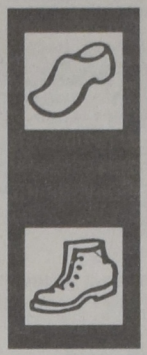
Events



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June 10-13

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Miscellaneous

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Classifieds

Personal

THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS:

SHEEGOW, Cabdi Weheliye, born July 15, 1972 in Feerfeer, Ethiopia, emigrated to Canada May 7, 1992.

SIEBERT, Martin Anton, born May 3, 1962, emigrated to Vancouver, Canada.

SMITS, Wieger, born August 24, 1931, last known address in the Netherlands: J. de Greefstraat 43 3E, Amsterdam, emigrated to Port Colborne, Canada July 18, 1957.

STEL, Lambertus, born July 10, 1931, last known address in the Netherlands: van Walbeeckstraat 77, Amsterdam, emigrated to Canada March 25, 1968.

SWAGERS, J.R.L., born December 27, 1959, last known address in the Netherlands: Lievevrouwestraat 26, Bergen op Zoom, emigrated to Canada September 1, 1994.

Personal

UBAGS, Mrs. H.A.M., born November 30, 1965, emigrated to Canada December 24, 1991.

VERHELIEN, Franciscus Hendricus Maria, born February 6, 1931, last known address in the Netherlands: Meeuwenlaan 75 1E, Amsterdam, emigrated to Canada June 13, 1959.

de VRIES, Trijntje, born February 7, 1970.

de WAAL, Sijlbert K.B., born June 12, 1966 in Oshawa, Ontario.

CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS
1 DUNDAS STREET W., SUITE 2106
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5G 1Z3
TEL. (416) 598-2520

Miscellaneous

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Ancaster Chr. Ref. Church
Youth Search Committee
Box 81151
Ancaster, ON L9G 4X2
Phone: (905) 648-2323
Fax: (905) 648-2916

Miscellaneous

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Miscellaneous

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Summer Job Market

Attention: All Students

We know that many of you are thinking about summer jobs at this time. As in previous years *Christian Courier* will carry the **Summer Job Market** section in the Classifieds. We urge you to check this section until **May 24.**

Send us your announcement now and include name, age, address, phone number, experience and the type of work you are seeking. Be as brief as possible! Please note:

1) We will run your ad in up to four (4) issues of *Christian Courier.*
2) Please cancel the ad as soon as you have found employment so that you don't use up valuable space needlessly.
3) **Due to tough economic times, we are compelled to begin charging a small fee for the space used. We suggest you send us a cheque for $5 x the number of weeks you wish us to run the ad (maximum $20, GST incl.).**

Good job hunting!
Stan de Jong
Manager

Attention: Employers

This summer why not hire a student to help ease your workload and get some extra things done? This spring, students will advertise their skills in our Summer Job Market section of the Classifieds. Please consider hiring one of them.

Some students may be hired when you call them. Please be patient. Sometimes they are hired before we can cancel their ad.

Miscellaneous

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Events

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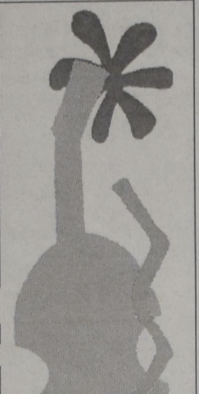
SUMMER SCHOOL



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The schizophrenic mind of China

Eric Hagt

Rarely have China and the West been so close and yet so far apart as they are today. Confounding symptoms of both excessive affection for Western culture and extreme xenophobia are evident in all aspects of Chinese society.

A pro-western bent is most poignantly manifested in China's voracious appetite for McDonald's food. Beijing alone now boasts 16 chain restaurants with plans in the works for five more. If you're wondering about their success, try finding standing room let alone a seat in Beijing's largest McDonald's (also the largest in the world) any day of the week. Likewise, sporting Levi's jeans, acquiring a personal Michael Jackson CD collection or driving any foreign-made automobile is sure passage into China's up-and-coming Yuppie society. Sino-foreign joint ventures are not only a guaranteed fiscal success but are the norm in Beijing's posher areas.

No close contact

However, anti-Western sentiment is equally ubiquitous. For a Chinese to have rapport with a foreigner beyond a professional level is often an unsavory impropriety that can incur discipline ranging from probable ostracization to possible job dismissal. More subtle forms of bias can also be seen in the double-pricing schemes for anything from toilet paper to train tickets. Foreigners are handed a tab two to three times higher than the locals. The most glaring discrepancy is the mentality of "standing up to the West," which seems to have become China's new foreign policy.

The mixed message reaches its zenith in public propaganda. In *China Daily*, the main mouthpiece of the state, diatribes denouncing Washington and London often run at the bottom of page one, while reports of growing economic ties with the two have their pride of place at the top of page one. Two diverse messages are being sent, but certainly the one at the top takes priority.

What does all this mean? It is clear the foreign influence is inevitable if not necessary, but stops at burgers and BMWs. Infatuation with Western popular cultures and a desire for prosperity is one thing; political orientation is another. As Mao Ze Dong tersely stated, "Western technology, Chinese ideology."

Growing nationalism

There is a deep vein in the Chinese psyche that the Middle Kingdom has fallen from grace in the past several centuries, partly from its own demise but also from past imperialist oppression. Although once the world's greatest civilization, China has suffered poverty, foreign domination and civil war since the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). The open reform policies, beginning in 1978, are bringing China to its rightful place in the international scene which no one is going to deny them.

In fact, a strong sense of nationalism is now on the rise in China. Recently, the focus has turned to the heroes of the Qing Dynasty, especially a general named Zeng Guo Feng, who was instrumental in putting down the Taiping Rebellion (largely thought of as instigated by foreign influence). A biography of Zeng Guo Feng became a bestseller, followed by so many TV shows about him that the press coined the term "Zeng Guo Feng Fever." The upshot of appealing to national pride in this manner has created a fervor to oppose any attempts — Western or otherwise — to thwart ambition of becoming a great nations once again.

In China, the curtain is rising for a new and prosperous era. The West, especially the U.S., is habitually regarded as the antagonist who wants to contain China's debut into this era. The message is clear: economic success and the affluent culture symbolizing it are welcome; however, woe to anyone detering China from becoming a main player on the world stage.

Eric Hagt is a Canadian medical student living in China.

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

May 4 Third Annual Spring Fling Dinner in support of Calgary Chr. School. At Glenmore Inn & Convention Center, **Calgary**, Alta. Info./tickets (403) 242-2896.

May 4-11 "In Concert," Willem Van Suydam (organ), Herman & Henk-Jan Drost (trumpets) and "The Liberation Choir." All events at 8 p.m. **May 4:** Chalmers United Church, **Woodstock**, Ont.; **May 10:** Metropolitan United Church, **Toronto**, Ont.; **May 11:** Central Presb. Church, **Hamilton**, Ont. Info./tickets: (905) 631-1929. (#)

May 5 The Mississauga Choral Society and the Sinfony Players perform Mozart's "Vesperae Solennes de Confessore," Haydn's "Theresienmesse" and Symphony No. 48, 3 p.m., St. Dominic's Church, Cawthra & Atwater, **Mississauga**, Ont. Info./tickets (905) 278-7059.

May 11 Eigth annual "Community Springfest" hosted by Calvin Chr. School, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Dundas Community Centre, **Dundas**, Ont. A fun day for the entire family! Admission free.

May 25-26 Third annual "Conference for Women in the Chr. Ref. Church," at Jubilee Fellowship CRC, **St. Catharines**, Ont. Theme from Job 42. Keynote speaker: Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen. Info.: Nancy Marsman (905) 682-1785 or Margaret Wunderink (905) 934-5589 (#)

June 1 Second annual "Calgary Chr. School Golf Tournament" in support of Calgary CS Gym fund. Registration per golfer $130. Info.: (403) 242-2896.

June 2 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Ralph Koops, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

June 7-8 Banquet and conference to celebrate the 25th anniversary of "The Voice of the Martyrs" (founded by Pastor Richard and Mrs. Sabina Wurmbrand), at Ontario Bible College, **Toronto**, Ont. Info.: phone (905) 276-6210 or fax (905) 276-0228 (#)

June 10-13 The "4-Day Evening Walk" at the Botanical Gardens, **Burlington**, Ont. To pre-register call (905) 383-6319 or write to: 4-Day Evening Walk Committee, P.O. Box 79554, Hamilton, ON L8T 5A2 (#)

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Ontario food banks draw connection between welfare cuts and increased clientele

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — The Ontario government's recent cuts to welfare rates have caused a 49 per cent increase in the number of people using food banks in Ontario, according to recent surveys done by Toronto's Daily Bread Food Bank and its sister organization, the Ontario Association of Food Banks (OAFB). Both surveys draw a strong connection between cuts to welfare and various problems faced by food bank clients.

In April, Daily Bread released the preliminary results of its 1996 survey of people accessing emergency food programs in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The results represent 444 of 910 case interviews with clients of 39 food banks in the GTA during February and March. A similar survey was done in 1995.

According to the latest survey, 70 per cent of Toronto's food bank users are on social assistance. Winston Husbands, Daily Bread's research co-ordinator who worked on the survey, adds that "about 80 per cent of the households who use food banks have one member on welfare."

A direct link

The survey summary states: "In a previous report last September, we anticipated a large jump in numbers due to pending cuts in social assistance allowance. Unfortunately this has largely been borne out.... The new survey data provides a direct linkage between the welfare cuts and that increased need."

This February, the food banks had 150,000 users, an increase of 54 per cent since last February. This included a 68 per cent growth in the number of children clients.

The survey also shows that 26 per cent of food bank users skip meals on a daily basis because they cannot afford to buy food. This is an increase from 15 per cent of clients in 1995. In total, 77 per cent of clients go without food at least some of the time, compared with 69 per cent last year. It concludes that these changes are explained by households whose social assistance support has been reduced. About 73 per cent of people affected by the cuts reported that as a result they go without food more often and 82 per cent said they have been compelled to use food banks more often.

COURTESY DAILY BREAD FOOD BANK

Volunteers sort food at Toronto's Daily Bread Food Bank.

Health and home affected

Another serious problem facing food bank users who have experienced welfare cuts is security of shelter. The Daily Bread survey shows that four per cent of these households have been evicted and 16 per cent have been threatened with being dispossessed of their homes. A total of 40 per cent of these households are paying their rent late and one quarter have missed rent payments. About 28 per cent have moved to cheaper accommodation since the welfare cuts.

Half of survey respondents affected by welfare cuts believe their health has gotten worse and 65 per cent say the same of their mental and emotional well-being since the cuts took effect. Of those looking for work, one third indicated the cuts have hampered their ability to find jobs and 48 per cent said they are forced to use public transportation less.

Welfare recipients are "coping in a variety of ways" with welfare cuts, says Husbands. "Some people have reduced their purchase of food [or] are not acquiring adequate winter clothing." Others use coupons to buy food or stop their telephone service.

In its conclusion, the survey states: "According to the data collected by Daily Bread, the cuts have created much more real hardship than the government indicated would occur.... For what is likely thousands of individuals and families, serious deprivation has resulted."

The OAFB survey, conducted between January and March 1996, shows similar results across the province. This survey of 33 food banks across Ontario shows that 375,000 people were served by the food banks in February compared to 250,000 a year ago. Of the food banks surveyed, 25 had an increase in clients while eight showed a decrease. The overall increase in clients was 49 per cent since a year ago. The largest increases occurred in small communities.

The survey notes that some new food banks (such as one in Coboconk, Ont.) have started directly as a result of the need created by welfare cuts.

Most of the food banks surveyed have reached their highest number of users since 1992, and some are setting new records, the survey reports. The food banks may not yet have seen the complete impact of the cuts because GST credits in October and January and back to school allowances last fall helped cushion the situation, the report concludes.

"The OAFB has communicated with the premier. So far there has been no response," says Husbands. But he notes that Premier Mike Harris visited Daily Bread Food Bank in early April, toured the food bank and met with its then-director, Gerard Kennedy. Since that time, Kennedy has resigned and plans to run as a Liberal in the upcoming by-election for Bob Rae's former riding in Toronto, explains Husbands. Sue Cox became the new executive director of Daily Bread in mid-April.

Husbands adds that Ontario's Liberal leader Lyn McLeod responded to Daily Bread's survey by raising a question in the legislature about it recently. Daily Bread's survey is done on a yearly basis by volunteers at member food banks, he adds.

Laws must be family-friendly, says Strathroy writer

CC Staff

STRATHROY, Ont. — One of our readers and contributors, Jacoba Bos of Strathroy, Ont., sent us a clipping of an article she wrote for the *London Free Press*'s March 9 column "Speaker's Corner." In it she argues for strong two-parent families and for governments to give greater recognition to the contributions made by traditional families.

"Recent studies bear witness to the fact that children need a father and mother to develop properly," writes Bos. "Children who grow up in such a stable environment, experiencing love, honesty and consistency in structured discipline, will in all likelihood develop into responsible adults and law-abiding citizens who are an asset to our country and culture."

Bos observes that the government "appears to be more intent on pleasing the Me-First generation with do-as-you-please laws that support common-law living, same-sex partners and teenagers who have decided to live on their own (with or without partners) leading to high school drop-outs and teen pregnancies."

Family-friendly laws

She urges the government to do more to signal its support for families. "Why is there not an agency within our federal and provincial governments with the task of reviewing all legislation that might affect families?" she asks. "Our laws must be family-friendly."

As example, Bos mentions the following: "A restructuring ... of the fees charged for many government-provided services. Why are seniors granted half price for many services such as camping when young families struggling to make ends meet must pay the full price? Why is more home care not available to help out during family emergencies? Legislation should support the Canadian family."

Jacoba Bos, who herself has grown-up children, ends her column by reminding the readers that "the hands of fathers and mothers that rock the cradle, cook dinner, help with homework, do the laundry, administer discipline and give hugs are ultimately the hands that rule the world."

Way to go! Jacoba Bos. We need more Christians to speak up in the secular press.

Thinkbit

To those who are sentimentally inclined: "One of the problems of real life is that it provides no background music."

Source unknown